DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 319 242 FL 018 534

AUTHOR Benson, Beverly; Denzer, Debra
TITLE From Theory to Practice: ESL and Literature.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (5th, Raleigh, NC, October 12-14, 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; Class Activities; Classroom Techniques; *Course Content; Elementary Secondary Education; *English (Second Language); Essays; Higher Education; *Literature Appreciation; Second Language Instruction; *Theory Practice Relationship; Writing Assignments

ABSTRACT

While literature has often been ignored in the English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) curriculum, there are good reasons for including it at all educational levels of ESL instruction. There are universal reasons for exploring literature, including the pleasure and escape it provides. In addition, ESL experts have found that literature encapsulates linguistic and cultural values. As a content area in ESL in higher education, literature is rich with terminology and concepts. ESL students in elementary and middle school benefit from positive reading experience, and may have no opportunity outside class for exposure to good children's literature. High school students can enjoy young adult literature. Adult basic education students benefit from a variety of literature types, and many issues and topics are relevant to this population. The advanced ESL student has particular skill development needs that can be addressed through literature study. Because of the inherent linguistic, literary, and cultural challenges in using literature in the ESL classroom, the demand on student and teacher is great, requiring pre-reading work and an orderly progression through each work. Instructors should provide an outline when introducing students to literature study. A variety of pre-reading, reading, classroom, and writing activities are available to enhance this process. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED319242

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: ESL AND LITERATURE

Beverly Benson and Debra Denzer

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Benson; Denzer

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

FL018534

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: ESL AND LITERATURE

When asked a few days ago which of the stories in a short story text was their favorite so far this quarter, a group of advanced ESL reading students gave varied responses. Some liked "A Summer's Reading"; some liked "And tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow..." Others volunteered titles that didn't ring a bell. These students were reading stories they hadn't been assigned!! Why? "Because I have time... because I like the stories..."

SO WHY HAS LITERATURE OFTEN BEEN IGNORED IN ESL CURRICULUMS?

The Linguistic Argument: If the most important goal of ESL instruction is basic communicative competence or the mastery of the formal grammar of English, then the complexity of the language of literature offers ESL students little assistance.

The Literary Argument: If we are teaching skills, then literature's creative use of language and its focus on interpretation make it inappropriate for the ESL classroom. Literature has been placed on a pedestal ESL students are not expected to reach.

The Cultural Argument: If literature depicts a particular culture of a particular time and place, understanding, learning from, and enjoying literature may be difficult, if not impossible, for students in a language class where time is limited. Who has time for all the explanations that need to be made?

In spite of these objections, some teachers have continued to push for the teaching of literature. Today, those teachers no longer have to justify teaching a short story by dissecting its grammar and listing its vocabulary with fill-in-the-blank exercises. As language teaching shifts from a focus on separate skills, as teachers realize that acquiring language involves more than the learning of rules, as we face students whose needs for language go beyond daily communicative competence, literature once again is an acceptable avenue to explore. The arguments against it can and have been easily countered.

WHY SHOULD LITERATURE BE PART OF TODAY'S ESL CURRICULUM?

Why teach literature in ESL? Many of the reasons are the same as for teaching literature to any audience. Robert Penn Warren has said that we read fiction because we like it; we seek in it a "clue to our own life story" and it allows us "to escape into other people's lives." We read fiction, according to Jim Trelease, "Because good literature is precise, intelligent, colorful, sensitive and rich in meaning" (1982). The students described in the introduction above were probably reading for these reasons.

In addition to these universal reasons for exploring literature, ESL experts have offered other rationale. John Povey's article "Using Literature with ESL Students" (1986) encapsulates its fundamental linguistic and cultural value. If

chosen carefully, short stories, poems, and plays can offer linguistic enrichment for the ESL student. Teaching literature offers an opportunity to dispel myths about English being purely utilitarian, the language only of science and technology. In many respects, the study of literature for ESL students can also be a shift of emphasis from skills and compartmentalized language study, to a focus on integrating language skills: reading, reacting, discussing, and writing. Through exposure to different writers, students can learn about style. They can enrich their vocabulary, not only in number of words, but also in connotative meanings.

Aside from linguistic value, the literary work offers cultural information as well. While the culture may prove a barrier, with input from the instructor, a student can gain insight from the literature or the discussion that ensues which results in a greater understanding of the target language and culture. Mary Ruetten Hank in "Using Short Stories in the Advanced ESL Composition Class" (1980) supports this point of view. She found that reading fiction allowed the students to discuss the universality of human problems and the way we deal with them in different cultures. Literature "encourages talking" (Enright & McCloskey, 1985) and provides the basis for highly motivated small-group work (Long and Porter 1985). Of course, the teacher plays a vital role here. As Patricia Johnson (1981) states, "the cultural origin of a story §hast more effect on the comprehension of the ESL students than the level of syntactic and semantic complexity." Therefore, the role of the ESL teacher teaching literature must be one of cultural and historical facilitator as well. Unfortunately, although the student who pursues higher education will encounter literature, he is not likely to be in a class where time can be taken to explain aspects of American culture. An English teacher teaching Oedipus Rex to Americans will give students background on Greek theater, but the same teacher is unlikely to do as much for an American piece because he believes (correctly or not) that students share certain cultural assumptions. Teachers of ESL, Carrell warns, must be "aware of the important role in ESL reading of background knowledge of text content, especially cultural content, and they must often be facilitators of the acquisition of appropriate cultural content knowledge."(1987)

Finally, there is support for making literature a content component of higher ed. ESL programs. As a content area, literature is rich with terminology and concepts. As Carrell points out, "Overt teaching about the top-level rhetorical organization of texts can facilitate ESL student's reading comprehension, as measured by quantity of information recalled" (1985). Consider the advantage gained by adding to the student's schemata the knowledge of how to approach a literary text and the greater breadth of experience with concepts and language when he or she gets into that freshman English class. Stephan Krashen, in Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition, supports subject matter teaching as a partial solution to the transition problem of moving from ESL to regular university classes (1982).

This is not to say that literature should replace any other kind of reading material or activity, merely that there appears to be abundant justification for finding its way back into the ESL curriculum.

WHO SHOULD READ LITERATURE?

ESL students in elementary and middle schools benefit from positive reading experiences as all children do. Since their parents may not read in English (or in some cases, their own language), these children may have no opportunity outside the classroom to be exposed to good children's literature. Exposure to the wealth of literature available can help these children with both the rhythm and vocabulary of the language, as well as teaching them about their adopted culture. Books for ESL children should be selected carefully; factors to keep in mind are the specific interests, ability level, and attention span of the students. Interestingly, there are many classic children's books in English that are translations from other languages and cultures. The teacher might find it valuable not only to ESL but to other children in the class to read some selections from translated tales. The Anansi stories of Africa and the Caribbean are two examples. Others might include Reynard the fox or Madeline stories from France, or Baba Yaga stories of Russia. Most public libraries boast such collections from many different countries and cultures. Simple texts such as Leo Lioni's offer beautiful illustrations, simple narratives, with allegorical meanings for the low-level older reader. One of the great advantages of reading to children is that they "want to imitate what they are seeing and hearing." (Trelease 1982) The ESL teacher can instill in students the desire for the riches that are in store for anyone who learns the pleasure of reading and can help to build a cultural understanding that the child will share with native speaking people.

ESL students in high school can enjoy young adult literature (Dunning 1988). In young adult books, ESL readers can find fast-paced, modern themes with uncomplicated plots and contemporary language, all in fewer than 200 pages. In addition to motivating students to read, young adult books help inexperienced readers build bridges from where they are now in their language development to where they need to be for academic success in American schools. Choices include fiction and nonfiction in numerous subject areas. In order for ESL students to succeed academically and culturally, they must be introduced to appealing, well-written books that are linguistically readable.

ESL adult basic education students benefit from a variety of types of literature. Many issues and topics in books for young adults are relevant to adult readers whose linguistic fluency does not yet match their maturity. For the more advanced adult learner, classical literature may be more appropriate and satisfying. Low level adult readers might be encouraged to read children's books to their own children.

While the study of literature, can enrich any student's language education, the **advanced ESL student** in higher education

has particular needs that can be addressed through this study of literature. As already stated, building schemata aids reading comprehension, and familiarity and attitude can ease transition. Furthermore, even though students plan to major in computer science or engineering, they need practice in reading and writing about topics outside their disciplines and may even enjoy the opportunity. Such students may face a freshman English course with native speakers. Therefore, introducing the ESL higher ed student to what will most certainly be part of his future study can only help. Any college education includes the study of rhetoric and at least an introduction to literary genres. While course work in literature may make an ESL instructor feel more secure in teaching this content , such background is not necessary to teach an appreciation of literature of ideas. A resource such as Perrine and suggestions below provide an instructor of ESL with enough material and background. Of course, reading each short story several times helps, taking marginal notes helps, identifying the literary conventions in a story helps. Remembering that there is no one theme and no one character to identify and encouraging students to support their ideas with specific references can become starting points.

The following suggestions are primarily for teachers preparing students for higher education, but many of the activities can be adapted to adolescents or adult learners and some even for children.

WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN BE USED?

Because of the inherent linguistic, literary, and cultural challenges in using literature in the ESL classroom, the demand on the ESL student and instructor is great and requires necessary prereading work and an orderly progression through a piece of literature. ESL instructors should provide an outline for their students to follow when they are first introduced to this type of language study. Introducing a piece of literature with enthusiasm and using the suggestions below can encourage reading and classroom interaction.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

The implications of schema theory suggest the need for providing a situational context for particular literary works. Although native English speakers will have a more varied vocabulary and more experience with American culture, they would not be expected to know the topic or theme before reading a piece of literature. Determining the amount of background information necessary for the ESL reader is text-specific; however, you need not give a summary of the plot or a direct statement of theme. The ESL reader needs to be provided only with information that a native reader might intuitively know. In addition to providing necessary cultural or historical background, the instructor might consider the following prereading activities.

Write-before-you-read (Spack, 1985) is an introductory activity in which students write about a similar experience to that found in a short story they are about to read. They write

in class for 10 to 15 minutes focusing on the content of the experience and not worrying about accuracy. Suggestions include writing about a daydream before reading James Thurber's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" or writing about a time they had a guilty conscience before reading Poe's "The Telltale Heart." Spack's write-before-you-read technique helps students relate the written text to their personal experience and knowledge. They see that literature deals with real, relevant topics. Some write-before-you-read topics are very personal and can be assigned as private writings, writings that will not be handed in or read aloud; others can be shared with partners and with the class. As a result of writing before reading, sharing their writing with their classmates, and listening to the writing of their classmates, students are prepared for the ideas found in the literature they are reading.

Vocabulary building can provide essential terms and cultural hints. Linda Gajdusek (1988) discusses three kinds of vocabulary items: (1) words whose meanings students can (and should) derive from context, (2) words (probably known by native speakers) that contain important clues to culturally understanding the story, and (3) words that proficient readers merely categorize. Group 2 words probably need to be pointed out and discussed since ESL students may lack this particular information. Many words fall into group 3, words that proficient readers cannot precisely define, but words they can ignore while still understanding the message. You should encourage ESL students to simply dismiss such vocabulary or run the risk of dictionary-text translation. Gaining the confidence to skip unknown words is a necessary step in extensive reading.

READING ACTIVITIES

Short, short stories and poems can certainly be read in class and discussed immediately; however, we recommend that students read the literary work first at home, two readings recommended: the first for enjoyment and general content understanding and the second for specifics and note taking. Outlining, writing answers to assigned questions, preparing a short story or poetry worksheet, or writing in a reading journal encourage students to think about their assignment before the class discussion.

Reading Journals provide a place for students to begin to express their ideas about a short story. Journals are popular in many ESL composition classes, and they can focus student attention in a reading class. Journal entries can be assigned by the instructor or can be chosen by students. Such writing assignments can be written before and/or after class discussion. "Students should see such writing not as a test of what they have learned, but as a mode of discovering what they know and understand about a story." (Spack, 1985) Journal entries can serve as stimulus points for class discussions or as entry points for more formal writing assignments. Students often enjoy hearing what other students have to say about a particular story and are pleased to hear their particular entry read aloud. There are several options for reading journals: they range from page-

long entries three times a week kept in a spiral notebook to dittoed pages shared weekly with the rest of the class. In any event, topics can be sequenced through out the term ranging from reactions and problems with a particular story to a focus on literary terminology: for example, students might write a plot summary, a character description, an alternate ending. Journals provide excellent places to tie reading and writing together in a non-threatening way, focusing on ideas rather than accuracy. An instructor need not read every entry, although certainly that is a wonderful option, and students can share their entries with each other. The journal is the place where students can test out their understanding of a particular story and their ability to make themselves clear in written English. Writing in their journals frequently takes some of the fear out of writing in English and writing about literature. It also bridges the gap between a reading class that only reads and a writing class that only writes.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Class discussions enable students to express their ideas and to ask questions. Although students are expected to read a short story before class, sometimes more than once, they are not expected to be able to interpret it completely or even understand it thoroughly. That is the purpose of class discussions in which they have a chance to ask and answer questions of each other and the instructor. Reading a story out loud in class is not recommended; this procedure discourages students from doing their home reading assignments. Instead, assume that all students have read their assignments and begin with the immediate questions about what happened (plot), to who (character discussions), where and when (setting), and how (the 4 W's and H approach). Discuss the surface level of the story or poem first. Then, consider who tells the story (point of view). Small groups work well establishing this information. Groups may not agree on various elements of a story, and you, as facilitator, can help students determine the acceptability of certain comments by referring them back to the text. At this point, each student should know what the story is about and be able to talk about it. Vocabulary work can be handled as well as cultural ambiguities at this time.

Literary Analysis requires a slightly different focus for discussion and writing assignment. It implies a knowledge of basic literary terms such as <u>setting, plot, character, point of view, theme, and style</u>. Readers must look for specific references in a work to support their generalizations and statements. Finding the one "right" answer is not important at this level of discussion, but rather pointing out the reasons and the support for certain opinions is. Working on theme and style may present difficulties for students. Not always is there a didactic theme (a disconcerting realization to many ESL students), and usually there is no one theme to find. Style brings the discussion back to language. Discussion can turn to figurative language, patterns common to literature, or can focus on communication problems similar to expository writing

situations. ESL students need explicit guidance in this type of assignment. Few will have analyzed their reading assignments in this formalistic way, either in English or in their first languages. In fact, not only will ESL students be unfamiliar with literary analysis, a process required in many college freshman English courses, but many will also be inexperienced in reading literature in English. A few may have read English literature in translation, but many with scientific and technical backgrounds will have had little experience with fiction. Even graduates from United States high schools may be unfamiliar with this process.

Short stories and poetry with plenty of discussion time provide an introduction to analysis. You might start by discussing one short story or poem as a class, the second in groups of four students, the third in pairs. Worksheets (see appendix) designed to elicit patterns of response for each short story or poem help students become comfortable with this relatively new experience.

Role Playing and Reading Aloud provide enjoyable and often revealing interpretations of the literature. Susan Stern (1988) suggests either improvisation or role-play interviews as activities that will encourage students to explore character. She suggests that the students portray themselves in the position of the characters and react as they would given the situation in a particular scene. In a role-play interview, students take on the character from the work and are asked questions by the rest of the class. Answers, then, would reflect the students' understanding of the literary character.

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Essays (in class or at home) written after class discussions are a final step toward academic writing. According to Anthony Petrosky (1982) "In order to help students understand the texts they read and their response, we need to ask them to write about the texts they read." (1982) He further states that writing a structured response more accurately represents comprehension than multiple-choice questions or quick-and-easy answer-type discussions. Instructors not only learn what their students have understood, they also identify areas for further study. The reading of literature provides topics, opinions, and details for successful student writing. Instructors have many options as to writing assignments; however, content, organization, and accuracy need to be considered. Assignments can range from a plot summary or character description (for intermediate-level students) to a comparison/contrast paper about two characters, a discussion of themes, or a report discussing several literary terms in relationship to a single story (see appendix). You might want to use a process approach to writing and peer evaluation as stages of essay writing. Revising for content and organization and editing for sentences and mechanics should be made a part of the process. This type of assignment is close to assignments students can expect in their academic courses.

Gajdusek (1988) concludes with the statement that "unless we structure the classroom experience so as to make <u>the students</u>

discover what is there, we are not really teaching literature--or anything--in ESL." If our goal is the communicative involvement of our students, we need to explore ways that enable students to make decisions and interpret them. As facilitators, teachers can establish a systematic approach that encourages student involvement and allows each student the excitement and pleasure of discovery. Working with a literary text enthusiastically and systematically with increasing student involvement can interest students whose linguistic ability may not yet equal their experience or maturity. Working with literature can bring new insights to the ESL classroom.

CONCLUSION

Literature should be part of any ESL curriculum. Literature will encourage some students to read more on their own. In the classroom, it will also provide opportunities to ask different kinds of questions, to participate in discussions, and to write about their responses. All of this will result in better readers and writers.

APPENDIX A

SHORT STORY:_____

AUTHOR:_____PUBLISHING DATE_____

I. **PREVIEW the story by following these steps:**
   A. Think about the meaning of the title.
   B. Read about the author.
   C. Skim the story.

II. **REREAD the story and complete this worksheet.**
   A. **Identify the SETTING.**
      1. Time (general)=_____(page____)
         (specific)=_____(page____)

      2. Place (general)=_____(page____)
         (specific)=_____(page____)

      3. Why is the SETTING important to this story?
         _____

   B. **Describe the PLOT (the sequence of events).**
      1. CONFLICT (page____):_____
         _____

      2. COMPLICATION (page____):_____
         _____

      3. CLIMAX (page____):_____
         _____

      4. RESOLUTION (page____):_____
         _____

      5. Write a one sentence plot summary:
         _____
         _____
         _____

   C. **Analyze the CHARACTERS.**
      1. The MAIN CHARACTERS are_____
         _____

      2. The MINOR CHARACTERS are_____
         _____

      3. Who is your favorite character?_____
         What do you like about this character?_____
         List four adjectives that describe this person.
         _____(page____) _____(page____)
         _____(page____) _____(page____)

      4. Is there a character you don't like?_____
         What don't you like about this character?
         _____

D. **Consider the POINT OF VIEW. (Who tells the story?)**
   1. Is the story (first person)?
      (omniscient)?
      (third person)?
      (dramatic)?

   2. Provide two page references that support the point of view you identified.
      (page____)_____
      (page____)_____

E. **Describe how the TITLE fits the story.**
   _____
   _____

F. **Identify at least one THEME of the story.**
   _____
   _____

III. **Explain YOUR REACTION to this short story.**
   A. **Did you like this story? Why? Why not?**
      _____
      _____

   B. **What was the hardest part of this story? the easiest?**
      _____
      _____

   C. **Would you recommend this story to a friend?**
      Why? Why not?
      _____
      _____

APPENDIX B

POEM:_____
POET:_____PUBLISHING DATE_____

I. **PREVIEW the poem by following these steps:**
   A. Think about the meaning of the TITLE.
   B. Skim the poem.

II. **REREAD the poem and complete this worksheet.**
   A. **CONTENT**
      1. What is the SETTING?
         Time_____(line____)
         Place_____(line____)

      2. Who is the SPEAKER?_____
         Describe the speaker:
         _____

3. Who is the AUDIENCE?_____

4. What is happening in the poem?
   OR What has just happened?
   _____
   _____

5. Write a one-sentence SUMMARY of the poem.
   _____
   _____

B. STRUCTURE

1. How many STANZAS does the poem have? _____
2. How many lines in each stanza? _____
3. Is there any RHYME or RHYTHM in the poem?
   What is it?
   _____
   _____

C. LANGUAGE

1. Are there any words you do not understand?
   What words?

2. Are there any words used in a special way?
   What words?

3. Can you find a SIMILE?_____(line___)
   a METAPHOR?_____(line___)
   an ALLUSION?_____(line___)
   a SYMBOL?_____(line___)
   any IRONY?_____(line___)

D. THEME

What is one theme of this poem?

III. Describe your REACTION to this poem.

APPENDIX C
CRITERIA FOR SELECTING LITERATURE

1. Select literary pieces that you enjoy and that are likely to interest students.

2. Keep the level of difficulty consistent with the students' overall proficiency level.

3. Note vocabulary that is likely to give students difficulty, especially if it is essential to the understanding of the work.

4. Be prepared to discuss historical or geographical information that might be necessary as background.

5. Consider the underlying cultural assumptions and conflicts present and how these relate to American culture. Also consider those that are universal.

6. Depending on the age and skill level of the students, apply those literary concepts the students might be expected to know.

7. Avoid marked dialect or slang and content that might attack students' values.

8. Make use of both intensive and extensive reading goals by selecting both short and long works.

APPENDIX D
AMERICAN SHORT STORY TITLES COMMONLY INCLUDED IN ANTHOLOGIES

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge	Ambrose Bierce
Paul's Case	Willa Cather
The Open Boat	Stephan Crane
A Rose for Emily	William Faulkner
The Lottery	Shirley Jackson
A Clean, Well-Lighted Place	Ernest Hemingway
Hills like White Elephants	Ernest Hemingway
The Chrysanthemums	John Steinbeck
The Secret Life of Walter Mitty	James Thurber

APPENDIX E
SUGGESTED CHILDREN'S STORIES

Anansi the Spider Man	
Tin Tin in Tibet	Herge
Madeline	Ludwig Bemelmans
Mishka	Victor Ambrus
Tikki Tikki Temio	Arlene Mosel
Rechenka's Eggs	Patricia Polacco
World Tales	Idries Shak
Waiting for MAMA	Marietta Moskin
Baba Yaga	Ernest Small
Inch by Inch	Leo Lionni
Swimmy	
Reynard the Fox	

APPENDIX F
LITERARY TERMS FOR DISCUSSING SHORT FICTION

PLOT: The plot of a story is the series of events that take

place. The plot is not usually the most important element in good fiction, but it is often the most interesting to students. All events in the story should relate to each other. A discussion of plot normally includes

A. **Initial Conflict:** the situation which introduces the reader to the main character; the story begins with some problem.
B. **Rising Action:** the action that complicates the initial situation, either physically or emotionally.
C. **Deciding Factor:** the event or complication which requires a change in a character or situation.
D. **Climax:** the actual point of change in the story: the end is decided at this time. It is the point in the story that creates the greatest degree of suspense for the reader.
D. **Resolution:** soon after the climax, the conflict is resolved--either by being solved or by being seen in a different way--and the story ends.
E. **Ending:** sometimes happy, sad, or undetermined.

CONFLICT: Conflict is important to plot and also to theme. It usually involves the major character and someone or something else. The conflict or struggle may be physical, emotional, or moral.

A. Man vs. Man
B. Man vs. Nature
C. Man vs. Self
D. Man vs. Society

POINT OF VIEW: This term is used to describe the angle from which the story is told. The reader identifies who is telling the story and what information that person has:

A. **Omniscient:** the story is told from the third person point of view, and the author identifies thoughts, opinions, and motivations of more than one character, as well as words and actions. The reader knows the thoughts of several characters.
B. **Limited Omniscient or Third Person:** the story is told from the point of view of one character, who is also part of the story. The reader knows the thoughts of only that character.
C. **Objective or Dramatic:** the author gives only the words and actions of the characters; the reader is almost watching a play or television show and does not know the thoughts of any of the characters.
D. **First Person:** the story is told from the point of view of one character in the story acting as the narrator and using the pronoun "I." The narrator can be the main character or one of the minor characters. It is important for the reader to recognize this point of view because only a portion of the information is available. The first person narrator interprets the actions and other characters for the reader.

CHARACTER: Discussion of character in a short story involves describing what the people are like, what they look like, and who they are. Characters can be very complex, and short stories may need multiple readings for a student to describe a character fully. An author helps a reader in one or both of the following ways:

A. **Direct Presentation:** the author tells us directly what a character is like.
B. **Indirect Presentation:** the reader is forced to interpret a character by reading about what the character does, says, and thinks and by watching that character in relation to other characters.

Other terms used to discuss character include the following

A. **Protagonist:** the central character who makes the action or to whom the action happens.
B. **Antagonist:** the character in opposition to the main character; he or she helps create the conflict.
C. **Dynamic and Round:** characters who are fully developed and are like real people with strengths and weaknesses; they usually grow or change during the story.
D. **Static and Flat:** characters who remain undeveloped and show no change or growth; they are usually minor characters.
E. **Stock or Stereotype:** characters who have no distinguishing individual features; they represent a type of individual such as the hero or the villain.

SETTING: The setting refers to the environment of the short story in terms of time and place. Both time and place can be general (by year and country) and specific (by day or time and room). The setting is often important to the plot and character development.

SYMBOL: A literary symbol can be an object, a person, an action, or another element that has a meaning different from or greater than its literal meaning. Some symbols are generally universal (the flag, the color white) and easily explained; others are unique to a particular short story and must be examined more closely. To determine if an element is a symbol, the reader can look are its emphasis and its repetition:

A. **Emphasis:** if an ordinary object, person, or situation is given unusual detail.
B. **Repetition:** if an ordinary object appears repeatedly.

Symbols get their meaning from particular situations in specific short stories; symbols may also suggest more than one meaning.

THEME: The theme is the central idea or major idea of a story. An author combines the characters, plot, and setting to reveal a theme or themes. When writers create stories, they usually have a unifying idea or theme in mind or a point to illustrate. This

idea can be discovered and traced by readers.

BACKGROUND READING

Allen, Virginia Garibaldi. 1979. Books to lead the non-English speaking elementary student into literacy. The Reading Teacher 32 (8) 940-946.

Brown, Dorothy S. 1988. A World of Books. Washington, D.C.: TESOL.

Bryd, Patricia. (Ed.). 1986. Teaching Across Cultures in the University ESL Program. Washington, D. C.: NAFSA.

Carrell, Patricia L. 1987. Content and formal schemata in ESL reading. TESOL Quarterly 21 (3): 461-481.

Carrell, Patricia L., and Joan C. Eisterhold. 1983. Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy. TESOL Quarterly 17 (4): 553-573.

Comer, Ellen D. 1986. Macalester College: the American language and culture program. In Teaching across cultures in the university, Patricia Byrd (Ed.), 63-73. Washington, D. C.: NAFSA.

Di Pietro, Robert J. 1981. The multi-ethnicity of American literature: a neglected resource for the EFL teacher. In On TESOL '81, Mary Hines and William Rutherford (Eds.), 215-119. Washington D.C.: TESOL.

Enright, D. Scott, and McCloskey, Mary Lou. 1985. Yes, talking!: Organizing the classroom to promote second language acquisition. TESOL Quarterly. 19 (3): 553-573.

Gajdusek, Linda. 1988. Toward wider use of literature in ESL: why and how. TESOL Quarterly 22 (2): 227-257.

Hank, Mary Ruetten. 1980. Using short stories in the advanced ESL composition class. In Selected Articles from the TESOL Newsletter 1966-1983, John Haskell (Ed.), 220-221. Washington D. C.: TESOL.

Johnson, Patricia. 1981. Affects on reading comprehension of language complexity and cultural background of a text. TESOL Quarterly 15 (2): 169-181.

Krashen, Stephen D. 1982. Principles and practice in second language acquisition. New York: Pergamon Press.

Long, Michael H. and Patricia A. Porter. 1985. Group work,

interlanguage talk, and second language acquisition. TESOL Quarterly 19 (2): 207-228.

McConochie, Jean. 1979. Cottleston, Cottleston, Cottleston pie: poetry and verse for young learners. English Teaching Forum 17 (4): 6-12.

McConochie, Jean. 1982. All this fiddle: enhancing language awareness through poetry. In On TESOL '81, Mary Hines and William Rutherford (Eds.), 231-240. Washington, D.C.: TESOL.

McConochie, Jean. 1985. Musing on the lamp-flame: Teaching a narrative poem in a college-level ESOL class. TESOL Quarterly 19 (1): 125-136.

McKay, Sandra. 1982. Literature in the ESL classroom. TESOL Quarterly 16 (4): 529-536.

Marshall, Madeleine. 1979. Love and death in eden: teaching English literature to ESL students. TESOL Quarterly 13 (3): 331-338.

Moran, Charles. 1981. Teaching writing/teaching literature. College Composition and Communication 32 (1): 21-29.

Nayar, P. B. 1986. Acculturation or enculturation: foreign students in the United States. In Teaching across cultures in the university ESL program. Patricia Byrd (Ed)., 1-13. Washington, D. C.: NAFSA.

Petrosky, Anthony R. 1982. From story to essay: reading and writing. College Composition and Communication 33 (1): 19-36.

Povey, John. 1986. Using literature with ESL students. ERIC/CLL News Bulletin 10 (1): 3-7.

Preston, William. 1982. Poetry ideas in teaching literature and writing to foreign students. TESOL Quarterly 16 (4): 489-502.

Sage, Howard. 1987. Incorporating literature in ESL instruction. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Smallwood, Betty Ansin. Literature criteria for ESL students. WATESOL News 17 (5): 1, 10.

Spack, Ruth. 1985. Literature, reading, writing, and ESL: bridging the gaps. TESOL Quarterly 19 (4): 703-721.

Stern, Susan. 1988. Linking literature and language learning in ESL. TESOL Newsletter EFS/E-SC 7 (1): 4-7.

Trelease, Jim. 1982. The read-aloud handbook. New York. Penguin Books.

Widdowson, H. G. 1982. The uses of literature. In On TESOL '81, Mary Hines and William Rutherford (Eds.), 203-214. Washington D. C.: TESOL.

Wolf, Dennie Palmer. 1988. Reading reconsidered: literature and literacy in high school. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

POETRY AND FICTION ANTHOLOGIES AND GUIDES

Bain, Carl, et.al (Eds.). The Norton introduction to literature. New York: W.W. Norton.

Cassill, R. V. (Ed.). The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction. New York: W.W. Norton.

Hibbard, A., Holman, C. H., and Thrall, W. F. (Eds.). A Handbook to Literature. New York: Odyssey Press.

Kennedy, X. J. (Ed.). Literature: An introduction to fiction, Poetry, Drama. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company.

McCuen, Jo Ray and Anthony Winkler. From idea to Essay. Chicago: SRA.

McMahan, Elizabeth, Susan Day, and Robert Funk. Literature and the Writing Process. New York: MacMillan Publishing.

Perrine, L. (Ed.). Sound and Sense. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich.

Perrine, L. (Ed.). Story and Structure. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich